

Activists' Attempts to Discredit FT Backfire

Forestry Tasmania has made a commercial decision to allow its accreditation with EcoTourism Australia to expire, following a cost benefit analysis.

"EcoTourism Australia invited Forestry Tasmania to renew its certification, but it was my decision to decline the request on the basis of cost," said Ken Jeffreys, FT's General Manager of Tourism.

"Our priority is to maintain accreditation by the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania.

"My decision not to renew should in no way reflect on the professionalism of EcoTourism Australia and I am sure its certification label is an appropriate and beneficial marketing tool for others."

Mr Jeffreys said it was a complete fabrication to suggest that certification was declined because any of FT tourism businesses did not meet the standards required.

"The public and the media should be take a very close look at the dishonest communication coming from the Huon Valley Environment Centre. There is no truth to their claim and they are intentionally misleading the public. This is what they do with the donations they receive.

"Once again, these individuals are spending their time and energy in mischievous ways.

"Forestry Tasmania understands that the public cares very deeply about how state forests are managed. FT is very proud of its record of environmental stewardship in offering world class forest-based tourism experiences in the Tahune Airwalk, Dismal Swamp, the Scottsdale EcoCentre, and Hollybank Treetops Adventure.

"Tourism is often cited by most environmental groups as an excellent opportunity to generate economic activity from Tasmania's natural beauty. By condemning tourism in state forests, the Huon Valley Environment Centre is confirming its place on the extreme fringes of a mature debate on responsible use of the forest.

David Tuck, Corporate Relations 6233 8249
ENDS
20 June 2008